

## Thomas Jefferson to Samuel Smith, March 24, 1801, The Works of Thomas Jefferson in Twelve Volumes. Federal Edition. Collected and Edited by Paul Leicester Ford.

**TO SAMUEL SMITH J. MSS.**

Washington, Mar. 24, 1801.

Dear Sir, —I have to acknowledge the receipt of your favor of the 20th. The appointment of Secy. of the Navy, was immediately in receipt of your letter declining it, proposed to Mr. Jones of Philadelphia. I cannot have an answer from him till the night of the 26th. But I have great reason to expect a negative. In that case I will gladly for the public accept your offer to undertake it for a time. Besides that it will comprehend important questions to be immediately carried into effect; it will give us time to look for a successor. I mention it now in hopes that in the moment you receive notice from me of Mr. Jones' refusal, if it takes place, you may be so good as to be in readiness to come here for a few days. If I receive Jones' refusal on Thursday night you shall hear from me Friday night, & may be here I hope yourself on Saturday night. Sunday & Monday will probably suffice for the first decisions necessary, so that I may get away on Tuesday, which now becomes very urgent.

I inclose you the answer to the address you forwarded me. Though the expressions of good will from my fellow-citizens cannot but be grateful to me, yet I would rather relinquish the gratification, and see republican self-respect prevail over movements of the heart too capable of misleading the person to whom they are addressed. However, their will, not mine, be done.

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Mr. Kelty is appointed judge in the room of Mr. Duval. Mr. Nicholas's being a Virginian is a bar. It is essential that I be on my guard in appointing persons from that state. I sincerely wish Genl. Wilkinson could be appointed as you propose. But besides the objection from principle that no military commander should be so placed as to have no civil superior, his residence at the Natchez is entirely inconsistent with his superintendence of the military posts. This would then devolve on Hamtranck, who is represented as unequal to it. We must help Wilkinson in some other way. Be pleased to present my respects to Mrs. Smith & to accept yourself assurances of my high consideration & esteem.